# State Connections

## The broadband working group for state legislators

**Third Wednesday of Every Month**
**2:00 ET / 1:00 CT / 12:00 MT / 11:00 PT**

***WE WILL BEGIN SHORTLY!***

November 2025

# Agenda

*Recording meeting*

- **Opening Remarks**
- **Non-Deployment Funds Advocacy**
- **BEAD updates**
- **New Research on RDOF Defaulters in the BEAD Program**
- **State Roles in BEAD Oversight**
- **Q&A**

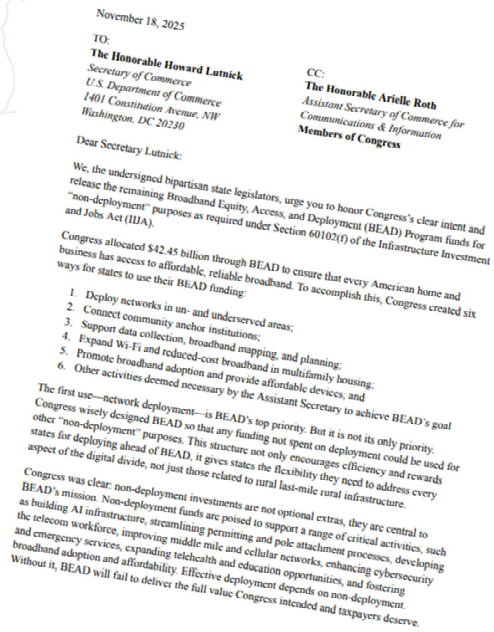
**Note: We are canceling our December 17th meeting. Look out for an updated meeting series for 2026!**

# Opening Remarks and Thanks

*Rep. Louis Riggs (MO-HD-5)*

- **State Connections letter to Sec. Lutnick and Asst. Sec. Roth.**
  - 124 signatures from legislators in 28 states!

*Thank you to all who signed the letter and promoted it to their legislative colleagues!*



November 18, 2025

TO:
**The Honorable Howard Lutnick**
*Secretary of Commerce*
*U.S. Department of Commerce*
*1401 Constitution Avenue, NW*
*Washington, DC 20230*

CC:
**The Honorable Arielle Roth**
*Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications & Information*
**Members of Congress**

Dear Secretary Lutnick:

We, the undersigned bipartisan state legislators, urge you to honor Congress's clear intent and release the remaining Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program funds for "non-deployment" purposes as required under Section 60102(t) of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

Congress allocated $42.45 billion through BEAD to ensure that every American home and business has access to affordable, reliable broadband. To accomplish this, Congress created six ways for states to use their BEAD funding:

1. Deploy networks in un- and underserved areas;
2. Connect community anchor institutions;
3. Support data collection, broadband mapping, and planning;
4. Expand Wi-Fi and reduced-cost broadband in multifamily housing;
5. Promote broadband adoption and provide affordable devices; and
6. Other activities deemed necessary by the Assistant Secretary to achieve BEAD's goal

The first use—network deployment—is BEAD's top priority. But it is not its only priority. Congress wisely designed BEAD so that any funding not spent on deployment could be used for other "non-deployment" purposes. This structure not only encourages efficiency and rewards states for deploying ahead of BEAD, it gives states the flexibility they need to address every aspect of the digital divide, not just those related to rural last-mile rural infrastructure.

Congress was clear: non-deployment investments are not optional extras, they are central to BEAD's mission. Non-deployment funds are poised to support a range of critical activities, such as building AI infrastructure, streamlining permitting and pole attachment processes, developing the telecom workforce, improving middle mile and cellular networks, enhancing cybersecurity and emergency services, expanding telehealth and education opportunities, and fostering broadband adoption and affordability. Effective deployment depends on non-deployment. Without it, BEAD will fail to deliver the full value Congress intended and taxpayers deserve.

# BEAD Non-Deployment Advocacy

*Reid Sharkey*

- **What's next?**
  - The letter is a great start. However, this is a critical time where continual pressure should be applied.
  - Meet with your federal delegation, make press releases, and talk about the issue with your colleagues.
    - Kudos to State Connections member Rep. Udell for his press release (coverage).

- **New threats in the Senate**
  - Senator Ernst has drafted a bill that would claw back all non-deployment funds (over $20 billion). All funds would return to the Treasury for deficit reduction.
  - Senator Wicker is considering legislation that would limit eligible non-deployment activities to AI and emergency services related uses. No bill is public yet, but it is being discussed on the Hill.

# BEAD Updates

*Gigi Sohn, Benton Senior Fellow and Public Advocate*

- **Latest news on Final Proposal approval process**
  - California was instructed by NTIA to delay publishing its Final Proposal for public comment.
  - In another effort to further reduce BEAD spending, NTIA is forcing many states to redo their "Best and Final Offer" (BAFO) round, which we described in last month's meeting .
- **15 state Final Proposals approved yesterday!**
  - LA, WY, IA, GA, AR, DE, ME, NH, CT, SC, ND, HI, MT, RI, and VA.
  - The BAFO round means that previously reported Final Proposal results may differ significantly from the now NTIA approved results. We will keep you updated on the changes
- **Have you spoken with your state broadband office? What are you hearing?**

# New RDOF Research Preview

*Janie Dunning*

- **Compares BEAD awardees to previous RDOF awardees who defaulted**

| | | | BEAD Award | | RDOF Default | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ARKANSAS | 20 | | | | | |
| ARKANSAS | | Amazon Kuiper | $1,718,244 | | NO | |
| ARKANSAS | | Aristotle Unified Communications | $68,997,759 | | NO | |
| ARKANSAS | | AT&T | $2,195,791 | | NO | |
| ARKANSAS | | Brightspeed | $26,279,777 | | NO | |
| ARKANSAS | | C & L Broadband Connect | $965,964 | | NO | |
| ARKANSAS | | CC Computer Works | $14,678,524 | | NO | |
| ARKANSAS | | Clay County Connect | $368,886 | | NO | |
| ARKANSAS | | Comcast Cable Communications | $21,894,431 | | NO | |
| ARKANSAS | | Connect2First Internet | $2,905,598 | | NO | |
| ARKANSAS | | Decatur Telephone Company | $1,342,473 | | NO | |
| ARKANSAS | | Hometown Internet | $88,455,722 | | YES | $1,424,229 |
| ARKANSAS | | Northern Arkansas Telephone Company | $12,762,645 | | NO | |
| ARKANSAS | | OzarksGo | $2,125,563 | | NO | |
| ARKANSAS | | Premier Holdings | $20,834,687 | | NO | |
| ARKANSAS | | Resound Networks | $5,241,421 | | YES | $1,354,625 |
| ARKANSAS | | SpaceX | $8,506,345 | | YES | $12,383,306 |
| ARKANSAS | | SWATCO | $436,706 | | YES | $196,456 |
| ARKANSAS | | Texhoma Fiber | $20,015,907 | | NO | |
| ARKANSAS | | WEHCO Video | $3,592,291 | | NO | |
| ARKANSAS | | Windstream Arkansas | $5,009,457 | | YES | $7,020 |

# New RDOF Research Preview

*Janie Dunning*

- **By Provider Broken out by State**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ARKANSAS | | Aristotle Unified Communications | 68,997,759 | | NO | |
| OHIO | | Aristotle Unified Communications | 31,323,078 | | NO | |
| TEXAS | | Aristotle Unified Communications | 56,914,449 | | NO | |
| WEST VIRGINIA | | Armstrong | 12,664,104 | | NO | |
| OHIO | | Armstrong Telecommunications | 5,295,820 | | YES | 645 |
| PENNSYLVANIA | | Armstrong Telecommunications | 19,926,183 | | YES | 38,356 |
| OREGON | | Astound | 111,676,890 | | NO | |
| TEXAS | | Astound Broadband | 166,100,901 | | NO | |
| WASHINGTON | | Astound Networks Washington | 3,561,219 | | NO | |

# New RDOF Research Preview

*Janie Dunning*

- **Based on Final Plans submitted to NTIA before “the curing process” so results will change**
- **Specific reasons for each RDOF default are not known. We are not saying they will default on BEAD.**
- **States had very little authority to make previous defaulters ineligible, but they can provide oversight and enforcement to identify and resolve potential BEAD defaults**

**ONCE AWARDS FINALIZED STATESS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY. YOU CAN HELP WITH THIS PROCESS!!**

# From Promises to Performance: BEAD Enforcement Tools States Need Now

*Stephanie Weiner, Senior Research Fellow at Georgetown Law's Institute for Technology, Law and Policy*

# Contact Information

**Janie Dunning**
janiedunning@hotmail.com
(573) 289-4277

**Drew Garner**
dgarner@benton.org
(314) 803-7187

**Note: We are canceling our December 17th meeting. Look out for an updated meeting series for 2026!**